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Platinum Edition. The right way to ride a three-wheeler.



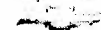
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# Life Lift

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## Calling All Cycling Amnesiacs: An 8-Step Bike Refresher Course

Posted: Fri 08/02/2011 12:50 PM | By: Corine Pikel

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Photo: Thinkstock

Two members of our staff swear they've forgotten how to ride a bike. No one believes them, they say. Add us to the list. So we called an expert to see if it's possible to lose the impossible-to-forget skill. Short answer: Not really, says Andy Clarke, president of the League of American Bicyclists. "If you learn how to stay upright, you hang on to that remarkably well." He says this because he's seen adult new-learners trying to balance on two wheels. "It's a very difficult experience for them," Clarke says. He'll admit that riders can become rusty over time—especially if your last bike had a banana seat and handlebar

streamers. Here's his advice for getting back in the saddle, just in time to take advantage of the bike-sharing programs popping up in Washington, D.C., Miami, Minneapolis and soon, Boston.

**Take time to prepare.** "It's the same as if you were renting a car," says Clarke. "Make sure you know where the gears are, you know where you're going and you have all the maps you need." Before taking off, adjust the seat to your height. Clarke says that when you're sitting on the seat with the pedal at the lowest point, your knee should be slightly bent, not locked straight. Riding with the seat too low or too high can make you feel wobbly.

**Go for a warm-up ride.** "Don't plunge into a busy five-lane thoroughfare. Find a parking lot, a wide plaza or another area clear of pedestrians."

**Remember the rules of the road.** Ride with traffic, and slow down and stop at red lights and stop signs, even if other bikes are blowing through intersections. "If you're at all unfamiliar with the city, you should definitely follow all the standard rules," Clark says. In some places, police issue tickets to cyclists for disobeying traffic signs.

**Don't hide.** Timid cyclists may make the mistake of riding on the sidewalk or hugging the curb. "Statistics show that riding on the sidewalk isn't safe, as they're designed for pedestrians traveling at 3 or 4 miles an hour, not the speed you're going on a bike," Clarke says. "In addition, you're invisible to motorists." Cars won't see you if you're in the gutter, either, and you also risk getting sideswiped by a car door or rolling over debris that can cause a flat. "You're much better off riding in the designated bike lane or in the road, where you're visible to all vehicles," Clarke says. "Don't get



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## about Life Lift

The Oprah blog is a place where you can find engaging news coverage, fresh inspiration, and the straight talk you've come to count on. A place that provides the tools you need to make a change—if not in the world—then at least in your little corner of it. It's a place that will raise your energy, lower your blood pressure and occasionally make you laugh—in short, a place of possibility.

## topics

Quotes (105)  
Thought for Today (84)  
Health (64)  
Something to Think About (62)  
Cooking (55)  
Happiness (49)  
Life Lifters (44)  
Fashion (37)  
Relationships (34)  
Beauty (33)  
Books (33)  
Love That! (30)

Gratitude Journals (15)  
Parenting (14)  
News (13)  
Tech (13)  
Events (6)  
Sites to See (6)  
Drinks (5)  
Saving Your Planet (5)  
Work (4)  
Notes from Oprah (3)  
Fitness (2)  
New Rules of Love (2)

nervous if a car needs to wait to pass you, even if they honk or yell that you don't belong there. You do."

**Communicate.** Remember those hand signals we were told to use as a kid? (L-shape, and upside-down U-shape... and something else?) Like the old rule that required cars to honk when passing riders, those semaphore signals have mostly fallen out of use. The most important thing, Clarke says, is to communicate your intentions to other cyclists and drivers in a clear, easy-to-understand manner. "If you want to turn right, make eye contact and point to the right. If you're stopping or slowing down, pull over to the right and wave on riders behind you with your left hand. Let the people around you know what you're doing."

**Recognize the new road hazards.** "The biggest thing that's changed for cyclists over the past few decades is the amount of distractions car drivers have. They're talking on the phone, texting and using other devices. Always assume the driver isn't paying attention to you."

**Beware of left turns.** Crossing traffic lanes to make a left turn can be tricky even for experienced riders, Clarke says. "There's no disgrace in pulling over to the curb and crossing in two stages, or walking the bike across the street with the pedestrians."

**Stay sharp.** It sounds obvious, but Clarke says that getting on a bike makes some people feel like they're 10 years old again—and with that comes a youthful recklessness. "I've seen people riding on crowded trails with both hands in the air like they're Lance Armstrong crossing the finish line of the Tour de France," Clarke says. For amateurs racing through downtown D.C. or St. Paul, Brake then celebrates.

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gpearson2

Posted: Mon 6/6/2011 11:29 AM

I'm disappointed in the picture used in this article. Any children on a bicycle should wear a helmet. It's the law in New Mexico, and I suspect in other states.

Reply to this comment



pikron

Posted: Sun 6/5/2011 7:18 PM

I agree with this article. I got on a "real" bike (not one of those stationary bikes in spin class!) recently and it all came back to me. Even though it had been over 10 years, it all came back to me!

Reply to this comment



inmybestlife

Posted: Fri 6/3/2011 6:50 PM

Perfect! Glad to see it. I was just going to haul out my old bike this weekend and give it a spin. I was surprised about not staying on the sidewalk. I'm very timid and it always scares me to be on the road.

Reply to this comment



pikron

Posted: Fri 6/3/2011 6:06 PM

What an informative article...and here I thought I could never ride a bike again since I'm 60 and really, really rusty!!

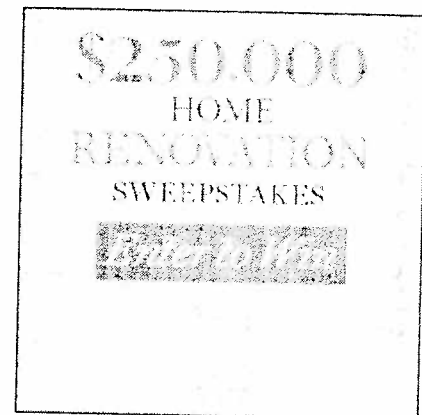
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Men (27)  
Food (23)  
Family (16)  
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Quizzes (1)  
Test (1)



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September 2011 (59)

August 2011 (144)

July 2011 (136)

June 2011 (147)

May 2011 (26)

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